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## The Fruits of Their Labor: Atlantic Coast Farmworkers and the Making of Migrant Poverty, 1870-1945

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all accounts, an immensely important institution, central to the lives of a large portion of Americans. Powers's book reveals its rich texture and helps us to begin, finally, to appreciate the experiences of the men behind the "faces along the bar."

*The Fruits of Their Labor: Atlantic Coast Farmworkers and the Making of Migrant Poverty, 1870-1945*, by Cindy Hahamovitch. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997. xiii, 287 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY STEPHANIE ANN CARPENTER, MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

Long ignored by mainstream agricultural and labor historians, the study of farmworkers has achieved recognition in recent years. That recognition, however, has been limited. Thus, *The Fruits of Their Labor* is a valuable text in the developing field of American farm labor history. With this work, Cindy Hahamovitch has written an exhaustive institutional study of Atlantic coast migrant labor prior to World War II. She studied the records of the federal government, growers, local governments, and unions to analyze the labor situation that developed along the Atlantic Coast. Combining federal and local government testimonies, reports, and hearings with contemporary accounts from scholars, newspapers, and individuals, the author successfully demonstrates the roles of the state, unions, and growers within the agricultural labor market, while describing the working, living, and economic conditions present for migrant workers.

*The Fruits of Their Labor* traces the development of migrant agricultural labor along the Atlantic Coast. The use of 1870 as a starting point is not accidental; Hahamovitch explains the significance of this period and its importance to the study of farm labor as dependent on agricultural changes in the western United States. The presence of large-scale corporate grain operations in the West hastened the development of truck farming in the East. Realizing that they could not compete with large operations in the West and recognizing the need for local supplies of fresh fruits and vegetables, farmers in New Jersey, Florida, and points between began commercial truck farming. This specialization required a different type of farm worker, one who would travel for each harvest. Growers needed laborers to work on a crop-by-crop or harvest-by-harvest basis rather than year-round. In New Jersey that meant Italians and African Americans; in Florida and other southeastern locales it meant African Americans and imported workers.

As the placement of workers in the fields became systematized, a system of labor recruitment also became important. Over time, labor contractors, growers, government workers, and agencies became employment officers; the Padrone system was born. Under that structure, government agencies and growers had the right to hire, fire, and control their workers in any manner they deemed fair. Hahamovitch's case study of Seabrook Farms in New Jersey portrays the concerns of growers, interaction with outside agitators, and conditions tolerated by workers. With this example, it is clear that workers had little or no bargaining power to secure better wages or living conditions. Growers exploited the laborers and used bias against their ability to perform satisfactorily to depress wages and hire scabs or imported workers. While progressive reformers, union leaders, and outside agitators sought reform in the early twentieth century, workers, for the most part, continued to live and work in substandard conditions. The failure to improve conditions for migrant laborers in the twentieth century can be blamed on agency infighting in Washington and a lack of understanding of the nature of agricultural piece work.

While the author has done a superb job of examining the institutional aspects of migrant labor, the voices of individuals from this admittedly underdocumented segment of the population are missing from her analysis. Still, Cindy Hahamovitch has presented a valuable study of eastern migrant labor during an important period of American agricultural history.

*Marching Together: Women of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters*, by Melinda Chateauvert. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998. xiv, 267 pp. Illustrations, tables, notes, index. \$46.95 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY NANCY GABIN, PURDUE UNIVERSITY

The story of the men who organized the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), the first national trade union for African Americans and the most influential black labor union in the mid-twentieth century, is renowned in the annals of American labor and African American history. In *Marching Together*, Melinda Chateauvert tells the less familiar story of the women who also fought to organize the BSCP and its Ladies' Auxiliary. She examines not only the wives and female relatives of sleeping car porters but an even less visible group of women in the union—those who worked as Pullman maids, car cleaners, and porterettes. Parsing the sometimes conflicting, sometimes compatible, concerns about manhood, female respectability, class consciousness,

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